

WALTER HOOKE TELLS OF UNION RELATIONS

Members of the Retail Merchants' division of the Torrance Chamber of Commerce met last Thursday to consider the formation of a labor negotiating committee to represent the Torrance stores in dealing with the Retail Clerks Union.

Walter Hooke, representing the stores which are closed in Torrance, J. C. Penney Co., and J. J. Newberry Co., invited to address the meeting, said that his group works with independent merchant labor relations committees in other communities and that he expects they will do the same thing in Torrance.

The Torrance merchants' current contract with the Clerks Union expires Feb. 1, 1948.

Hooke reviewed the wage dispute that resulted in the closing of the Penney and Newberry stores last July 3, and then explained why the companies have declined to arbitrate.

"As for the wage rates," he said, "we find that our offer (a 10 per cent increase) in February was higher than any rates then prevailing in the country. It still is equal to or above, with slight variations, any presently being paid. As a typical case, let us take our offer for the ready-to-wear classification: 'Torrance—offer \$39.32. 'Union—demand \$48. 'San Francisco, 5-147-\$39 and \$40.50. 'San Rafael—\$38. 'Seattle—\$34 and \$36. 'We could present like statistics for other classifications, but believe this one makes the point.

"As for arbitration, there has been a lot of drum-beating by various groups, individuals and the secretary of the clerk's union. Before examining the merits of arbitrating this particular case there are a few generalities regarding arbitration that should be aired.

"We believe in arbitration under certain conditions. We insisted that our last agreement with the San Pedro union contain an arbitration clause and as a matter of fact the original refusal of the union to include such a clause was one of the real stumbling blocks in reaching a settlement in July, 1946. It is noted that your present agreement contains no provision for arbitration for any disputes.

"Our feeling is that disputes arising over the interpretation and application of contract clauses are suitable subjects for arbitration.

"Aside from these generalities let us look for a moment at the situation here in San Pedro and Torrance. Just why does a union which has opposed arbitration in the past suddenly demand it in this case? Is the position they take of insisting that we pay the full demand or else arbitrate fair? We made an original offer of 10 per cent but never was there any counter-offer from the union.

"The companies that are involved have been in business for periods of time ranging from 35 to 68 years. These companies have, during these periods, operated and are operating now, stores in many hundreds of communities throughout the 48 states. During the lifetime of these companies, they have worked with many different representatives of organized labor in widely scattered communities.

"There is no single locality in this country with which we are, familiar, where the record of 'disputes' and 'upheavals' affecting not merely their businesses but also the whole retail business in a community that can approach in the slightest degree the repeated and constant 'disputes' and 'upheavals' that have occurred in the harbor area.

"The situation in the harbor area is most extraordinary. You will find by reviewing the record that both the employees and the employers have suffered from a chronic state of difficulty and harassment. The attitudes and philosophy which underlie these recurrent stoppages of commerce and loss of employment for the employees have created a condition of affairs that cannot be arbitrated."

Perry Pupils Building Model Community

Miss Olive Marshall's 3rd grade children at Perry School took an interesting and instructive trip Friday morning in connection with their study of community life. They visited Torrance Manor, the housing project at the corner of Crenshaw blvd. and 174th st.

"One of the construction engineers told the group interesting facts about the project which will be helpful to them in planning and working out a miniature Perry community in their room.

Forty-two enthused third-graders spent part of the afternoon choosing committees and planning their building program.

Consuelo Gerardo, Donald Pendleton, and John Jenopovich are working on the map committee.

Mary Elizabeth Selover, Gail Ronevo, and Jan Evans have agreed to work on the record committee.

The building committee consists of George Yoshioko, Barton Davidson, Charles Dahm, and Emil Hutchins and the modeling committee of Michael Dralé, Donald Mitchell, Tim Dagnell, Douglas Whitecotton, Luth Thrall, Jeannette Cowie, Joan Long, Joe Deniz, and Ernest Puga.

'Injured' Girl In Auto Wreck Merely Fainted

A frightened young lady gave Torrance police quite a scare last Thursday following a freak automobile accident on Narbonne ave. at 237th st.

Joann Councilman, 17, 2342 Pacific Coast Highway, was driving down Narbonne ave. at about 7:30 p.m. when she attempted to throw a lighted cigarette butt out the window of the car. The glowing stub fell into the car instead and in her attempts to find the cigarette, she lost control of the car.

While the car was out of control, it hit a bus bench, went more than 100 feet further and skidded to a stop facing opposite her original direction. When police arrived, Mary Joyce Gordon, also 17, of 25524 Narbonne ave., a passenger in the car, was found unconscious.

Miss Gordon was rushed to Harbor General Hospital and on her arrival, it was found that she had suffered no injuries, but had merely fainted, apparently from fright.

GARDENA BUSES ABANDON LINE ON UPPER WESTERN

Gardena Municipal buses will no longer travel Western ave. from Gardena to 103rd st. but will loop back at 110th st., according to a new schedule which has been approved in so far as the City of Los Angeles is concerned.

The Board of Public Utilities and Transportation, approved the petition of the Gardena line to abandon its route on Western ave., because the Los Angeles Motor Coach Lines have been extended along the same route. Arrangements have been made, however, for transfers from the Los Angeles system to the Gardena lines.

EDUCATIONAL COUNCIL MEETS TODAY AT NOON

The regular monthly meeting of the Torrance Educational Advisory Council will be held today, Nov. 20, in Daniels Cafe, according to Evelyn L. Carr, secretary of the organization.

Representatives unable to attend have been asked to notify alternates, according to Mrs. Carr. The group is made up of delegates from 25 organizations in Torrance, and recently sponsored a reception for teachers of the new Torrance City School District.

HEAR!—Howard P. Courtney

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